

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01

TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 IO-10 HEW-02 EAE-00 /079 W

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P R 051154Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9084

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 16072

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARK, ELAB, TH

SUBJECT: THAI SECURITY GUARD STRIKE

REF: BANGKOK 15812

SUMMARY: AT A MEETING CALLED BY THE PRIME MINISTER THE MORNING OF AUGUST 4, THE PM TOLD THE DCM THE THAI SECURITY GUARD STRIKE HAD BECOME A SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEM REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ACTION. PM OUTLINED THE GUARDS' DEMANDS AND URGED US TO TRY TO MEET THEM, IF POSSIBLE. HE SAID HE HAD SCHEDULED A MEETING WITH THE GUARDS AT 1600 HOURS THAT AFTERNOON. IN VIEW OF THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE MEETING AND THE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, COMUSMACTHAI COMPLIED WITH OUR REQUEST TO GO ALONG WITH THE TERMS TENTATIVELY AGREED UPON AT MEETING BETWEEN DCM AND PM. END SUMMARY.

1. AT A MEETING CALLED BY THE PRIME MINISTER MORNING AUGUST4, THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE DCM THAT THE THAI SECURITY GUARD STRIKE HAD BECOME A SERIOUS
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POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR HIM AND HE FELT ACTION HAD

TO BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY TO SOLVE IT. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS NOT IN COMPLETE SYMPATHY WITH THE GUARDS AND THEIR DEMANDS, BUT HOPED WE WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO DO SOMETHING TO FACILITATE A SOLUTION. KHUKRIT SAID THAT THE GUARDS HAD FOUR DEMANDS.

2. SEVERANCE PAY - FIRST, THE PM SAID, THE GUARDS WANTED MORE SEVERANCE PAY THAN CALLED FOR UNDER THE THAI LABOR LAW OR UNDER THE US-THAI MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. THE GUARDS WERE ASKING FOR 12 MONTHS' SALARY FOR THOSE WHO HAD WORKED UP TO FIVE YEARS AND 15 MONTHS' SALARY FOR THOSE WHO HAD WORKED SEVEN YEARS OR MORE. THE DCM REPLIED THAT WE COULD NOT POSSIBLY PAY SEVERANCE PAY IN AMOUNTS THAT WENT BEYOND PROVISIONS OF THE THAI LABOR LAW. THE PRIME MINISTER ACCEPTED THIS AND SAID THE GUARDS WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT.

3. REGULAR PAY - PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE GUARDS WERE REQUESTING THEIR SALARY BE PAID FOR THE PERIOD THEY HAD BEEN ON STRIKE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT IN SYMPATHY WITH THIS DEMAND, THAT IN PRINCIPLE STRIKERS SHOULD NOT RECEIVE PAYMENT OF ANY KIND; HOWEVER HE WONDERED IF IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE A PAYMENT WHICH MIGHT BE CALLED A "HUMANITARIAN PAYMENT" FOR THE FAMILIES OF THE STRIKING GUARDS. THE DCM REPLIED THAT IN PRINCIPLE WE WERE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY PAYMENT OF THIS SORT. HOWEVER, IF THE PRIME MINISTER FELT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO USE THE MONEY WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO PAY THE SALARIES OF THE GUARDS HAD THEY NOT BEEN ON STRIKE, MINUS THE MONEY USED TO PAY THE PER DIEM OF THE REGULAR MILITARY WHO HAD BEEN REPLACING THE GUARDS, AS A "HUMANITARIAN PAYMENT." THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED HOW MUCH MONEY WAS INVOLVED. THE DCM SAID THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO REFINE THE FIGURES, BUT THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ABOUT 2,800 BAHT PER GUARD. THE PRIME MINISTER STRONGLY URGED US TO OFFER A SOLUTION OF THIS SORT WITH RESPECT TO THE GUARDS' DEMANDS REGARDING SALARY WHILE ON STRIKE.

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4. RETROACTIVE OVERTIME - THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE NEXT DEMAND OF THE GUARDS WAS FOR RETROACTIVE OVERTIME PAYMENTS. DCM REJECTED THIS OUT OF HAND AND THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT DISPUTE THIS REJECTION.

5. MEDICAL BENEFITS - THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE LAST

DEMAND CONCERNED THE FUNDS WHICH WERE TO HAVE GONE TOWARD A MEDICAL BENEFITS PLAN FOR THE THE GUARDS. THE FEBRUARY 1975 AMENDMENT TO THE THAI SECURITY GUARD CONTRACT CALLED FOR THE USG TO PUT 40 BAHT PER MONTH PER GUARD INTO A MEDICAL FUND. THE MEDICAL PROGRAM, HOWEVER HAS NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED BY SUPREME COMMAND. THEREFORE, THE GUARDS WERE REQUESTING THAT 40 BAHT PER MONTH, FROM FEBRUARY 1975 TO THE PRESENT, BE PAID TO THEM DIRECTLY AS A MEDICAL BENEFIT. THE DCM SAID WE WOULD TRY TO BE FORTHCOMING ON THIS DEMAND.

6. PRIME MINISTER THEN SAID THAT HE WAS HOLDING A MEETING IN HIS OFFICE AT 4:00 P.M. THE SAME DAY TO WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GUARDS AND SUPREME COMMAND HAD BEEN INVITED. HE HOPED AT THIS MEETING TO BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THE STRIKE AND THEREFORE WANTED TO BE INFORMED BEFORE THAT TIME THAT WE COULD CARRY OUT THE AGREEMENT MADE BY THE DCM AD REFERENDUM AT THE MEETING WITH THE PM. HE ALSO REQUESTED THAT AN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING. HE SAID THAT SUPREME COMMAND WAS ANXIOUS THAT AN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE CONFIRM THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS GIVEN TO SUPREME COMMAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING THE THAI SECURITY GUARDS. THE DCM SAID WE WOULD UNDERTAKE TO GET APPROVAL OF THE REQUESTS WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MADE IN TIME FOR THE 4:00 MEETING AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM AS TO WHO THE AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE AT THE MEETING WOULD BE. (THE FOUR P.M. MEETING WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CANCELLED BECAUSE THE GUARDS LEADER BANKIT THONGOAN DID NOT APPEAR.)

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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P R 051154Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9085
SECDEF WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU I
COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 16072

7. THE PRIME MINISTER IS OBVIOUSLY LOOKING TO US FOR
HELP ON THIS ISSUE. AT THE SAME TIME, BY ACTING
RAPIDLY HE HOPES TO TAKE MAXIMUM CREDIT FOR HAVING
RESOLVED THE STRIKE. BY BEING FORTHCOMING IN THIS
CASE WE WILL BUILD UP ADDITIONAL GOOD WILL WITH THE
PRIME MINISTER WHICH WE WILL BE ABLE TO DRAW UPON LATER.
THE PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT
SHOULD BE HELPFUL IN ASSURING THAT THE PROVISIONS
OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THAI SECURITY
GUARDS ARE CARRIED OUT IN THE FUTURE.

8. FOR THESE REASONS, EMBASSY URGED COMUSMACTHAI
TO GO ALONG WITH THE TERMS TENTATIVELY AGREED
BETWEEN THE PM AND THE DCM, AND IN VIEW OF THE POLITICAL
IMPORTANCE OF THE MATTER, BE ACCEDED.

9. ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 5, REPRESENT-
TATIVES OF SUPREME COMMAND, TSG, AND MACTHAI MET WITH
THE PRIME MINISTER TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT.
DESPITE TALKS WHICH LASTED OVER FOUR HOURS, THE MEETING
WAS INCONCLUSIVE. ANOTHER
MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 6.
WHITEHOUSE
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